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Conference Abstract

The *Field Guide to the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape* app: A Partnership Between the Gunditjmara Community and Museums Victoria

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Abstract

In March 2011 Museums Victoria participated in the Australian Biological Resources Study's Bush Blitz in Kurtonitj, Lake Condah and Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Areas in western Victoria. These areas form part of the Budj Bim Cultural Heritage Landscape recently nominated for World Heritage Status. The Bush Blitz found 854 species that were not previously recorded from the reserves, including over a dozen new to science. Thousands of specimens of plants and animals were collected during the survey, including over 1000 by Museums Victoria.

The Bush Blitz ran in close cooperation with Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and Working on Country rangers. The relationship established between Museums Victoria and the Gunditjmara during the initial Bush Blitz resulted in several return trips by Museum scientists. From these grew a project to combine the Gunditjmara's traditional knowledge of the animals of their Country with the scientific knowledge generated through the Bush Blitz and other surveys.

The result is a free app for iOS and Android, the *Field Guide to the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape*, presenting over 250 species found in and around the area. For over two-thirds

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of these species traditional knowledge is included, such as names in the Dhauwurd Wurrung language, information on how they were hunted and used as well as beliefs and stories. Images and descriptions of cultural objects related to daily life in this landscape are also presented. The app contains over 700 images of wildlife and country as well as calls from frogs, birds and mammals.

The content of the app was developed by staff at Museums Victoria in collaboration with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. We believe this is the first time this sort of synthesis of cultural knowledge specific to the biodiversity of an area has been presented alongside the scientific knowledge.

The app is being used on Country by Gunditjmara for education within the community, by heritage researchers working in the area and by other visitors to Stone Country. We hoped the app would be a model that other communities could adopt using the freely available code and we have had enquires about managing data for similar projects. All the information in the app is stored within the museum's collection management database (EMu) allowing its association with taxonomy as well as specimens from the area, enriching our knowledge and understanding of our collections.

Keywords

apps, biodiversity, first peoples' knowledge, collaboration, data management

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